

TAR HEEL TALK

N.C. Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

Winter 2020

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BLUEGRASS MUSIC in NC



Features

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SUMMER READING 2019 WINNER

Every year, the North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has its Summer Reading Program. We hold a program for our adult and children patrons. Participants who read the most books over the summer earn top prizes; patrons who read at least five books will receive a participation prize. In total, we can have up to twelve top winners. The top 3 adult readers using BARD, the top 3 adult readers who receive their books through the mail, the top 3 children using BARD, and the top 3 children who receive books in the mail. We decided to interview our Adult Summer Reading winner this year, Karen Reynolds. She read a total of 325 BARD books between the beginning of May and the end of August.

How did you hear about our Summer Reading Program?

I read about it in the newsletter several years ago.

Was this your first time participating in our Summer Reading Program?

This was not my first year. I've participated for several years.



What was your favorite book you read for Summer Reading?

I have many books that I thoroughly enjoyed reading this past summer. I think my all time favorite was "Ladybug Farm" by Donna Ball. I read the first book and was immediately hooked on the whole series.



NCLBPH SUMMER READING 2019
GOING WILD

Do you have a favorite genre? If so, what is it and why?

I don't think I have one favorite genre. I enjoy family style books such as the Little House series. I also enjoy historic fiction romance books such as the Cynster series. And I also enjoy anything to do with crafts including fiction such as the Blossom Street series, the Seaside Knitters series, Elm Creek Quilters series, and many others including reading knitting and crocheting pattern books. I also enjoy reading nonfiction books, such as cookbooks, gardening and health and environment. For me, it might be easier to just say what I don't listen to-sports and hard core murder mysteries. And even then I'll read exercise books.

Were you able to read all of the books that you wanted this summer?

There were several other books that I wanted to read this summer, but I didn't get to them until this fall.

How did you make the time to read this summer?

I listen to books while knitting, exercising, doing laundry, etc. Every minute I can listen to a book or read it in Braille is a minute I'm learning something new or enjoying a good fiction book-someone else's world.

How did you learn about our library?

I was subscribed to the library when I was a child by my rehab teacher that I had during school.

Other than reading, how did you spend your summer?

I did some gardening and knitting. I also did some hiking.

How do you like your prize?

I love it! Thank you.



Would you recommend any book you read this summer to any of the other patrons?

Yes, I would recommend “Ladybug Farm”. Those are such fun books.

Why is reading special to you?

My favorite place is a library. When I wonder around in one it is like the books are all talking to me. They say “read me”. They seem to whisper “me first” or “me next”. Or maybe once in awhile “read my story” or “I’ll teach you something”. Books and all libraries fascinate me.

Will you participate next summer?

If I am able, I will participate next summer.

Visit our website to learn more about our Summer Reading program. Also, look for the sign up form we send out in the print edition of the Tar Heel Talk.



TIPS FOR BETTER SERVICE

- Please be sure to return cartridges in the container that matches the book or magazine.
- If you receive large print or audio magazines, please return them to the library when you are finished reading them.
- If there is a problem with a cartridge or the cartridge is missing, put a note in the case or a rubber band around the damaged cartridge. Please do not write on the cartridge, case, or any labels on these items.
- If you often replace your smartphone, there is a maximum number of devices you can have registered with BARD. Please notify us when you get a new phone so we can delete the old one from your account.

STAFF PROFILE: HEATHER BROWN

Heather is one of the most seasoned employees this library currently has. She has been ensuring that NCLBPH patrons are receiving the service they deserve since she was 18-years-old. Since she was 18, she has seen many people come and go through this library. She has been a friend to all that have come through here. She has also treated the staff and volunteers with her amazing baking skills. Nearly 30 years later, she's ready to move on to the next phase of her life and enjoy retirement. She has agreed to answer a few questions before her official retirement this summer.

What is your job title?

I have been the supervisor of the Patron Processing Department since the end of 2007. Our department is responsible for creating and maintaining all the patron library accounts and providing catalogs and materials for new patrons and providing coverage for all the receptionist duties for the library.

What is your average day like in your current position?

I normally come in early and check the voicemail in the mornings and cover the front desk until the full time receptionist comes in. I make sure everything in the

department runs smoothly daily and provide assistance with issues or problems with patron accounts, the BARD download system and the National Library Service database.



I have worked throughout the library through the years so I am familiar and comfortable working and helping with many different types of issues.

What led you to work for NCLBPH?

I applied to work at the library because of my love of reading and because of the unique service this facility provides.

How long have you been working for NCLBPH?

I have been working at the library for 29 ½ years and will be retiring mid-year.

What positions have you held while working for NCLBPH?

I was first hired for an entry-level position in the circulation unit and spent 5 years in that capacity. I then was promoted to the machine department and learned to repair equipment for reissue. I then worked as a data entry clerk in the Patron Processing department for several years, learning about creating and changing patron accounts. I was then approached by the assistant regional librarian about applying for a vacated position in the readers advisory department. She felt all the knowledge I had learned in the various departments, along with my voracious



love of reading would translate well in that capacity. I applied and did well on the knowledge test of classical materials that was required (which I was MOST nervous about!) and served well in that department until my previous supervisor in Patron Processing retired

and I applied to replace her. I was very knowledgeable about most aspects of the position and provided a seamless transition. I have been working in that capacity since December 2007 and will hand the baton over to my replacement on my last day, June 30th, 2020.



How have you seen this library change in the time you've been here?



I hope to make a second career of it and share my love of cakes full time with people who want a tasty treat for their own celebrations!

The library has changed so much since I began working here in 1990! Back then, we provided patrons with books on cassette, which was the newest media available, along with Rigid Discs (old recorded vinyl albums) and also flexible discs (super thin recordings that also played on a record player). We provided braille and large print for our patrons at that time also. Since then, we have phased out everything but braille and now provide our audio materials in digital format, which provides excellent sound quality and much more storage capacity. The ultimate goal is still the same though-provide our patrons with quality materials to share the love of reading!

How will you occupy yourself after you retire?

When my son went away for college, I started taking Wilton cake decorating classes and have become fairly proficient in it.



What are some things you will miss after you leave?

I will miss my coworkers the most-they are my second family! I will also miss the positive interactions with patrons, thanking us for providing something that enhances their lives on a daily basis. I plan on coming back to volunteer when I am able though. You can't get rid of me that easily!



NCLBPH CAN HELP DECLUTTER YOUR HOME

Are you an avid BARD Mobile user on your iPhone, iPad, or Android device? If you are, then your Digital Talking Book Machine that you received from our library is probably collecting dust on a shelf somewhere. Or, perhaps you're using it as a doorstop or a paperweight since you have no earthly idea what else you could possibly do with it.

Not to worry! We can help you! We have a Digital Talking Book Machine recycling program. We will take your no-longer needed player, recondition it, and send it out to another patron in need.

If you would like to send us back your Digital Talking Book Machine, we will gladly accept it into our recycling and reconditioning program. You can send it back in the box it came in. Please include a note in the box stating that the player is no longer needed.

Please also make sure to take out the mailing card on the top of the box, flip the card over, and reinsert it so that our name and address is visible, rather than yours.

If you don't have the box that your player came in, please call us at 1-888-388-2460, and we can send you an empty box.

Once your player is boxed up, simply hand the box to your mail carrier or take it to your local post office. No postage is required for sending your player back to us.

FRIENDS CORNER

Good day Friends, Patrons and Volunteers!

We hope you enjoyed your holidays. This is my first Tar Heel Talk column. I am the new president of the Friends. My name is Susan King. Some of you may know me from my days at Camp Dogwood, others may know me from my current place at Division of Services for the Blind. I have been on the Board of the Friends the last few years and am honored and delighted to continue to serve in my new role as president. I know you are used to finding Eddie Weaver in this spot, don't fret, he is still with us as past president. Thank goodness, because he is a great mentor.

I'm an avid reader. I have been that way since I learned to read in kindergarten. Reading takes me places figuratively and literally. My desire to read got me in trouble at times as a grade school student, because instead of listening to the teacher, my attention would be on the adventure story hidden under the desk in my lap. My love of reading was a better fit in college, it helped me be a successful student, and later a good employee. I am fortunate my family supported literacy, and I spent many hours at the libraries as a youth. Literacy and accessibility are near and dear to my heart. I am so pleased to have this opportunity to promote them. Please help us with this mis-

sion.

Membership renewal time is here. Please go online or mail in your renewals. Your membership makes possible the support we provide to the library when they need it. We recently funded new large print books, descriptive videos, Braille paper and a new Braille Embosser (printer) among other things. Our mailed and emailed notices are heading your way. We need you, so we may keep up the good work the Friends are doing.

We are seeking new volunteer board members for our upcoming election. If you are interested in serving with us, please go to our website, click on the email link, and let us know. Please send a brief paragraph about why you would like to serve, and how you can help our mission of literacy and accessibility.

I hope you know why your membership and donations count. Through the Friends you support the Braille writer program, the NCCVIB conference, and the Braille Challenge in addition to the direct support we provide to the library. Literacy and accessibility are our mission and goals. My point is, you probably don't know about the many ways we support the library and by extension, YOU. WE need you to be a part of this.



I live in Catawba County in the western half of North Carolina. If you know where Hickory NC is, then you know whereof I speak. This is important, because we need more outreach across the state. What else can we do to support literacy, from Murphy to Rodanthe, in our partnership with the library? Would you like for us to do a program about the NCLBPH and Friends in your county? Would you like us to send you some library and Friends brochures and applications to share with your friends and neighbors? Does your local library have applications and brochures? We want to hear from you!

Check out our website at friendsnclbph.org

Email us at info@friendsnclbph.org

Write to us at:

Friends of the Library
1841 Capital Boulevard
Raleigh, NC 27635

Your Friend in Literacy,
Susan L. King
President



Friends of the
**North Carolina Library for the
Blind and Physically Handicapped**

Membership Online Application

To learn more about becoming a member of the Friends of NCLBPH visit:
friendsnclbph.org/membership.php

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THE COLLECTIONS COMMUNIQUE

A QUARTERLY COLLECTIONS UPDATE

The National Library Service (NLS) is now providing access to Yankee Magazine via BARD and via its Magazine on Cartridge program. As a result, The North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will no longer be including this title on our Local Magazine Cartridge. If you have enjoyed Yankee Magazine and wish to continue receiving it, please contact the library so that we can get you signed up to receive this title directly from NLS.

Two highly anticipated political books have been added to our digital talking book collection: [A Warning](#), by Anonymous, and [Triggered: How the Left Thrives on Hate and Wants to Silence Us](#) by Donald Trump Jr. Please contact the library to order either these titles. Disclaimer: We make no endorsements as to veracity of the factual content of either of these books.

We are finishing up a recording of a book titled *A Day of Blood: The 1898 Wilmington Race Riot*. Here's a description from the book's page on Amazon: "In this thoroughly researched, definitive study, LeRae Umfleet examines the actions that precipitated the riot; the details of what happened in Wilmington on November 10, 1898; and the long-term impact of that day in both North Carolina and across the nation."

Now at the dawn of a new decade, here are some current statistics for our collections as a whole: We have approximately 95,000 digital talking books available in hardcopy or on download; 23,000 Braille books available either locally or via Interlibrary Loan; 22,000 Large Print books available in hardcopy; and 640 DVD titles and 460 VHS titles available for circulation.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: FLORENCE NASH



Florence Nash is one of our library's long-term volunteers. If you receive our local talking books and magazines on cartridges or download them from NOBLE, there is a good chance you have heard her voice before.

When Florence comes to NCLBPH on her day of the week, she offers her narrating talent. Our narrators always work in pairs with a monitor who operates the recording software as the narrator reads. When her first monitor had to stop her volunteer services due to accepting a new job, Florence still wanted to volunteer with us; so, she found a replacement for her previous monitor in no time at all!

Since volunteering for us, Florence has worked with at least four different monitors; two volunteers, and two staff members. Florence's ability to work with so many different monitors proves her comfort in her narrating ability and her dedication to our patrons in getting the job done.

How long have you been volunteering for NCLBPH?

Six years

What made you choose to volunteer for NCLBH?

I've always loved reading aloud. Our family used to camp a lot along the California coast from our VW van, and I'd read to the children for hours to pass the road time. When my husband developed health problems that curtailed his reading for a couple of years, virtually every book I read was read aloud.

Maybe it was the Dalai Lama who once said, *Your calling is where your joy intersects with the world's need*. A visually impaired friend once told me more or less the same thing (though somewhat less tactfully): "Anyone who enjoys talking as much as you do should consider putting it to some good use. Why don't you volunteer to record for the blind?" I didn't take offense — I took her advice! And it's given me a great deal of pleasure to feel that I'm being helpful at the same time I'm doing something I enjoy as much as this.

What has been your most memorable project so far? Why?

Hard to say, but I'd probably choose a book we did last year recounting the progress of the American Revolution through NC, valley by river by forest and battle by battle.

Before They Were Heroes at King's Mountain



Randell Jones

Not that I'm a war history buff, but it was a very well-written account, clearly exhaustively researched, so I was just happy to have this new insight into the history of familiar places in my native state. It was a treat to have a full-length book instead of magazine articles; also, as an editorial fuss-budget, I do love good, sound writing.

What do you like about volunteering for NCLBPH?

First, as mentioned, just doing something fun that's also a useful contribution, and, as a choral singer and a poet who gives public readings, I love the challenge of bringing words on the page to life through the voice. And I must say it is

satisfying to feel part of a community of good people who all volunteer their time and efforts to the NCLBPH, even if we hardly ever connect. The volunteer appreciation events are a valuable opportunity to put a face and personality to the names on those review sheets.

What did you do before volunteering here?

I worked at Duke University Medical Center for about 20 years as, variously, assistant to the dean of the medical school, a research analyst for a multi-center Alzheimer's study, and managing editor of a medical journal. For 16 years, I led the poetry workshop for the OLLI program in Duke Continuing Ed. And since 1987 I've sung in the Choral Society of Durham, and still do.



What has being a volunteer here meant to you?

I hope that's been covered pretty thoroughly above. I'm grateful for this opportunity and have no plans to quit any time soon. The staff are great and a pleasure to work with, and my former and present monitors have been terrific partners, from whom I learn constantly.

Is there something you would like to say to the patrons that listen to your projects?

Yes! Hi there, folks. This state has a remarkably rich literary culture — clusters of wonderful writers around every corner! Does anybody out there think it would be a terrific idea for the NCLBPH — in partnership with, say, the NC Writers Network, the NC Arts Council, the NC Po-

etry Society — to develop an archive of local writers reading from their own works? Not that every good writer is a good reader, and vice versa; we'd have to keep an eye on that. But this has been a little tickle of an idea in the back of my mind, which I'm beginning to talk up with others, and it would be valuable to get feedback from potential consumers. What do you think?

Please send your responses to either clint.exum@ncdcr.gov or adrian.sanders@ncdcr.gov

NOBLE: LISTEN UP NC!

One of the many services we offer our patrons is access to our version of BARD we call NOBLE (North Carolina BARD Local). NOBLE features digital braille books and digital talking books and magazines which are published in North Carolina and produced by our library. While there is no patron application necessary to use NOBLE, all media downloaded from NOBLE can only be played on a digital book player approved by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

You may visit NOBLE to see if there is anything you would like to download by going to: statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/lbph/read/download/noble

PATRON PAGE TURNERS

Our patrons often send us hand written notes with the books they have return to the library about how much they enjoyed their selected reading material. The notes we receive vary from patron to patron. We enjoy receiving notes; so if you have been sending in notes please do not stop sending them. We want to give all of our patrons an additional avenue to share their thoughts about the books they have read.

Patron Page Turners is an effort for us to build a stronger sense of community between our patrons who are spread out throughout North Carolina, and the library. With Patron Page Turners, our patrons can read books reviews from other NCLBPH patrons and have the ability to share their thoughts and feelings about different books they read and perhaps make recommendations of what books to read next.

In order to send in a Patron Page Turner you may visit the link at the end of the article. At the bottom section of the page, patrons will have the ability to fill out a form asking for your name, title of the book you're reviewing, and whether you would like it to be potentially featured in a future Tar Heel Talk. Please be respectful in your reviews; try to avoid spoiling books by revealing major plot points or twists that occur in your review. Patron Page Turners will be reviewed before being published. Check our page or social media pages to see when new reviews are posted.

You may view Patron Page Turners here:

statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/lbph/read/patron-page-turners

TALKING DESCRIPTIVE VIDEO CATALOG

The library has just produced a brand new all audio version of the 2019 Descriptive Video Catalog. The catalog is a collection of all of the DVD's available today from the library. It is available from NOBLE as downloadable digital talking book so you can listen to it on your Digital Talking Book Player and from our Descriptive Video page on the website as a now playable MP3.

Listen Now – Descriptive Video Catalog and order a movie today.
statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/lbph/services/descriptive-videos



BARD MaDness

We are in the middle of the College Basketball season, and with March Madness soon approaching it is time, once again, for NCLBPH's BARD Madness. Last year, we selected books from BARD's monthly Top 10 list, divided them by the seasons the lists were published, narrowed each list from 30 to 17 and made four brackets for 17 different titles. The extra ones were in the first four.

BARD Madness was inspired by March Madness and Book Madness. Excluding the First Four, the rounds follow the same format as the March Madness rounds: Round of 64, Round of 32, Sweet Sixteen, Elite Eight, Final Four and finally the Championship. During each round, participants will vote for their favorite book, or based on the description of the book which one they would prefer to read. The book with the most votes wins its match and advances to the next round.

This year, we are giving prizes to our winning participants; the prize this year will be a sorter for your different charging cables! No longer will you need to

travel with your cords and wonder if you have them all.

Keep a look out for our Facebook and Twitter profiles to see when voting takes place. When participants vote for the books, they will be prompted to enter their e-mail and phone number so we may contact them if they win that round! Once a participant votes, they will be entered into a drawing to win a prize. Multiple entries will only be counted once. There will be six rounds, and six chances to win! All winners will be contacted directly.

Be sure to follow us on our Facebook and Twitter page to see when these things are posted.

Facebook: facebook.com/nctalkingbooks

Twitter: twitter.com/nclbph

THT FEATURE: JOHN SANTA

This past December, the Library held a program at the Governor Morehead School for the Blind, where NC Humanities Road Scholar, John Santa delivered a program talking about the origins of Bluegrass music. The program was overall well received. After John Santa spoke, he performed with library patrons, John and Sandy Deluca. After the performance, program attendees got to meet with the performers and get some more hands on experience with the instruments! Get to know John Santa a little better through this Q&A interview!

What got you into music?

I was 13 and walked into my friend Bob Schmidt's room in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He had some blues playing on his record player. I went over and picked up the album cover of what was playing and turned it over. There was a photograph of an old black man, Huddy Ledbetter, better known as Leadbelly, sitting stiffly in a dark wool suit with a high cellulose collar posing in the formal photographic portrait style of the time. He looked very serious, almost ominous, and he was holding a twelve-string guitar.

I was transfixed by that guitar, the man and the music. It was as if he reached out of that photograph and grabbed me by the lapels and pulled me in and whispered, "Come ON, son!" I put the album cover down and turned to my friends and

said "I'm going to play the 12 string guitar."

They all laughed because I did not own, nor could I PLAY, a guitar. A year later I bought my first twelve-string.



You play 18 instruments; that's not an easy task. Could you please list the instruments you play, and which ones are in your top 5 of favorite instruments to play?

Well it's eighteen if you count the 12 string, 6 string, Nation Steel Bottleneck guitar and electric and acoustic guitars as separate instruments which I guess some do. Same with electric bass guitar and upright acoustic bass (we call it the "doghouse bass" in Bluegrass.) Mandolin, Cello, Dobro, Banjo, Violin, Sitar, Tambora, Keyboards ie, piano, organ and synthesizer, Harmonica, Drums. I used to play some sax and clarinet but haven't in a long time. Same with my bagpipes; those suckers are LOUD.

Eighteen instruments is not that big a deal really. Not when you've been playing all your life like I have! And most of them are strings so they're all basically the same concept.

'Course MUSIC is all the same so in the big Zen giggle of it, it's pretty accessible....

At any rate, all these years later I still love the 12 string guitar though I don't play it in public that much anymore. I suppose my top instrument is my 6 string acoustic guitar though. My marriage to my Martin D 35 is the longest relationship I've had with a woman other than my mother and sister. I REALLY love playing the cello. It's a very sensual instrument. You can actually feel the vibrations of the low notes all through your body. I dig that. The mandolin is the puppy dog of the stringed instrument world. It just loves to curl up in your lap and be held and sing for you, and I love that about it for sure.

I enjoy the dobro a lot because you actually HEAR the sounds you make. People don't realize it, but we are (for the most part on acoustic instruments) BEHIND our instruments, so we don't really HEAR them. But the dobro lays in your lap and the sound just comes straight up and washes over you. It's fabulous.

Plus, sometimes when I'm really gone in the music, I get to watch my fingers do this delicate and graceful little ballet over the strings and that's kind of fun.

When you think about it, the piano is a kind of miracle. A fairly complex machine that's been around for centuries, it is STILL one of the most expressive and in-



dividualized instruments you can play. When I was at Carolina, you could give the person at the Student Union information booth your student ID and go in the Great Hall and play a sixteen-foot Steinway Grand piano for an hour! Most days, there was nobody wanting in after me, so it wasn't unusual for me to cut my classes and get lost in there for four or five hours at a time. What a dream that was. I took my guitar in and played a chord on the guitar and then found it on the piano. First song I ever learned on piano was "Let It Be." To this day, it's usually the first song I play when I sit down at a piano.

Which instrument was the easiest to learn to play?

Probably the harmonica. I don't actually remember LEARNING the harmonica. It was just kinda always there in my pocket and I'd pull it out and honk on it a while.



One day the guys in the band said, "We're gonna do this blues tune. You take the harmonica break." And I did. The harmonica is a little guy but it's got some POWERFUL mojo. You can pull that sucker out, walk up on stage and start blowin' and the next thing you know the girls are dancin' on the pool tables.

Which instrument was the hardest to learn?

The violin. First off, there's no frets so for a fretted instrument guy like me that was tough. Then you have to master that BOW, which, when you been STRUMMING all your life is murder. You really got to make a deal with the devil to play violin well, and I wasn't goin' the Robert Johnson route, so I switched to cello which was hard enough. My dogs (who really LOVE me) would get up and LEAVE THE HOUSE when I picked up the cello. Even when there was FREEZING RAIN outside! I got to tell you: that HURT man. Proud to say they sit UNDER the cello now when I play, so I reckon I got better. And once I

did, I went back and cut my OWN deal for the fiddle!

You are a bluegrass musician, but do you ever play any other genres of music?

Oh gosh yes! Blues, folk, rock 'n roll, Americana, some jazz, a little classical.

Practicing is essential to every musician. What are some of your practicing methods you would be willing to share?

Well, this is completely self-serving, but I teach so I try to practice what I preach. I have a series of exercises a hand therapist developed with me that really work the specific muscles in the hand needed to play guitar, and I do those before every recording session to get my hands in shape. But mostly I think you just have to play. A LOT. Put on music and play along. Mix up the genres so you're challenging yourself. Have fun but REMEMBER the good licks and things that work so you LEARN and get better. Honestly there are three pieces of advice I like to give musicians who are starting out:

1.) Always play with people who are better than you.

I do that to this day.

2.) LISTEN.

Music is a CONVERSATION. You can't respond if you're not hearing what the other person is SAYING. I see SO MANY musicians who just don't LISTEN. It's tragic. And now this third one isn't mine, it's from Charlie Parker:

3.) Master your instrument.

"Master the music. And then forget all that bullshit and just play."

When you are writing songs, where does your inspiration come from? Do you put lyrics to a melody or a melody to the lyrics?

It's only recently that I've begun to write a songs AWAY from an instrument. It's a pretty bizarre feeling, but I'm getting used to it. I had this idea for a song with the title "Jim Beam, Jack Daniels and Me" about a guy sitting by himself in a bar. The title gestated for quite a while and then suddenly some lyrics would just pop into my head and I'd start typing them into my lap top so I wouldn't lose them, and the rhythm of them, the way they scanned, SOMETHING, just gave me the melody and the whole song went like that.

Later it was kinda weird making the guitar conform to the melody I'd created since that is the opposite of how I usually

work. Most of the time I'll be siting with my guitar or mandolin and come across a melody or phrase and that will kick off some lyrics or a thought in my head and then it just goes from there. Some songs are done in a half an hour; on others, I was in labor with them for YEARS! Ideas come in weird ways too. It's all how your brain deals with your life stuff. My friend Meg Scott Phipps and her husband Robert were going to move to the mountains, and I was bummed about that cause we'd filled their house with crazy musicians and laughter for YEARS at our annual New Year's Eve party. Then somewhere I heard a banjo player I only peripherally knew had died, and that was in my head. It all got rattled around in my brain and became the song *Resting Place (The Mountains Are Waiting For Me)* I knew it needed to have a North Carolina theme and the lyric took kind of a black humor twist.



Here's a sample verse:

*I got people pushing daisies in the Pied-
mont*

*I got folks who scattered ashes on the
breeze*

*We all got a resting place somewhere
And the mountains are waiting for me
Where the Blue Ridge trail winds
Through the very tall pines*

*And there's ten million stars you can see
We've all got a resting place somewhere
And the mountains are waiting for me*

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And you can see how my co-lyricist Martin Brown and I worked the theme of loss and the mountains into the song. One of my fondest memories of performing this song was at an annual gig we played on the 4th of July over in Hillsborough. We played the song, which in spite of its themes is actually a pretty cool and uplifting tune, and when we finished Greg Eldred, our fabulous guitar player and a great song writer in his own right, leaned over to me and whispered, "Well that's just GREAT! Now I'll have THAT song stuck in my head for the next two weeks!" Don't get much better than that!

What are your songs to you?

My songs are like my kids, and just like kids at some point they ask for the keys



to the car because they want and need to go out there and exist and have a life AWAY from you.

That's when you begin to record your songs so they can go on line or be on an album (if people still DO such things) and other people can play and perform them. And they get HEARD so they become a part of OTHER people's daily lives, which is pretty amazing when you think of it.

Who are some of your favorite bluegrass musicians? Do you have any favorite musicians or groups outside of bluegrass?

Because my band EIGHTwentythree (named for the first time we ever played together, August 23, 2001) plays a lot of original music, at this point I try NOT to listen to what other Bluegrass artists are doing.



But certainly, Sam Bush, Rhonda Vincent, Chet Atkins, Alison Krauss, Charlie McCoy, the

always incredible Doc Watson and of course the man himself, Bill Monroe.

I'm blessed to work with some genius musicians and we're constantly challenging and redefining our sound and who we are, so it's hard enough to keep up with THEM, let alone what's out there on the radio or online. Our CD, *The Blessing of The Strings* is entirely made up of original songs and we've sold over two thousand copies without any major label backing or advertising so we must be doing SOMETHING right!

Outside of Bluegrass, keep in mind I grew up on the Beatles, James Brown, Zeppelin, The Who, Sly and The Family Stone, Smokey Robinson and the mostly male dominated pop music of the time.

Heck the first music I ever purchased was by Little Anthony and the Imperials! And of course, I filled up my head and my heart with Sonny Terry and Brownie Mckee, Robert Johnson, and Leadbelly to name but a few. I listened to Stan Getz, Joe Pass, Wes Montgomery, and Toots Thielemans.

But now I tend to listen to mostly female artists. At this point in my life, I know how men think so that has very little interest for me. When I first got into Bluegrass, I was AMAZED at how egalitarian the music was. Women were EVERYWHERE and on every instrument. Many of them were multi-instrumentalists.

So, Bonnie Rait (particularly her earlier stuff), Iris DeMent, Adele, Loreena McKennitt, Joni Mitchell, among others. And I still crank up Alanis Morissette's "Jagged Little Pill" and fly down the interstate from time to time.

What inspired you to get into video production? What kind of films do you produce?

Well this is NOT gonna be the answer you expected, but the space shuttle helped me get into video production. There was





a big push to MINIATURIZE everything because weight is so crucial in space flight. That miniaturized tech eventually filtered down to the recording world and suddenly 16 track tape decks that cost \$150,000 were now available in a smaller, lighter versions for five thousand dollars. At that point even I could afford to own a studio. Seems funny now in the age of computer-based recording, but it was a big deal way back when.

So, I was writing music for industrial videos and shows and the film industry was taking off here in North Carolina, but we didn't really have a skilled work force to support it. Because I had done some audio repair for some badly recorded field audio, eventually one of the producers just asked me to come out with them and record it right in the first place. I told them I had no experience and they basically said, "Heck NOBODY here does!"

So I read some books and asked around and went on my first shoot. That led to more and more field work and the years went by and one day I was standing beside some grips and we were all com-

plaining about how badly organized this shoot we were on was and I muttered, "Heck even I could do a better job than THIS producer." And one of the grips turned to me and in a completely off hand way said, "Yeah we were talking at lunch about how you'd be a great producer."

The thought had never ever crossed my mind but once he said that to me, I couldn't get it out of my head, so I started going after some producing jobs and the rest, as they say, may not be history, but it's MY history!

I wear a lot of hats in music and in video, so I'm gonna take the easy way out and give you some lines from my bio:

Mr. Santa has won accolades for his book *Bluegrass Is My Second Language: A Year In The Life Of An Accidental Bluegrass Musician* and several documentary television scripts, most notably *Collateral Damage: Drug Abuse In Anesthesiology*.





Photo by Lillie Elliot

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He has won many awards for his video productions and while he revels in telling many different kinds of stories, he most enjoys the ones that in some way seek to make the world a better place, thus the preponderance of educational and medical videos in his resume.

At various points in his life he thought he was a guitar player, a writer, a cellist, a journalist and a producer. Then one day he realized he was really just a storyteller and his life got much, much easier....

When you're not playing music or producing a film, what would you consider great way to spend your time?

Well I do the normal stuff: Watch TV, hang out, have dinner with friends. But honestly, even when I'm doing that if someone calls up and says, "Hey man, you wanna come over and play?" I'm there.

Do you have any advice to offer for any aspiring musicians?

If you're a writer, write. If you're a painter, paint. If you're a musician, mus-ish. And by that I mean play music. Play the gigs, do the sessions, teach lessons, PLAY. If you make music the center of your life you may not get rich and famous but you'll succeed.

Video links to program performances

youtu.be/JLvFKU9y4J0

youtu.be/xzovjhlcabk

youtu.be/L1e_Dty8rkQ



ANOTHER LIBRARY CAT?

By Karen Broderick

It was a cold snowy day in Iowa. The librarian went to check the night drop chute to reclaim any books that had been left there. She found a bedraggled kitten who was half frozen. This kitten grew into a cat who cheered anyone who visited the library, and had a “sixth sense” about those in need. He was called Dewey, and the book about him can be requested from the North Carolina Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.



Enter Smeagol, named for the hobbit, in JRR Tolkiens book, who later became known as Gollom. Smeagol is about one year old and was found by one of the staff members in the woods behind the library. He is a soft gray short haired cat, whom staff and volunteers alike have now adopted. He is a feral cat who didn't take easily to being handled, in the beginning. However, with food offerings and gradual

interaction with staff members, he has become a regular feature of

daily life for the library. Studies have shown that interaction with animals can lower blood pressure. Well, Smeagol seems to have such a calming effect. We don't know if he will become our Dewey, but it will be fun to see.

Editor's Note: In the time after this article has been written, Smeagol has been adopted by this newsletter's editor. He has been neutered and vaccinated, and he loves his new home.



DIGITAL TAR HEEL TALK

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TAR HEEL TALK

